

Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, January 3, 1845, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>FRANCIS P. BLAIR TO JACKSON.

Washington, January 3, 1845.

My Dear General: After the congratulations of the season, I must again congratulate you on the good fortune, which makes it more than usually, one of rejoicing with your friends throughout the Union. They feel that there never was one in which the vast influence which you exert over the public mind, was ever crowned with a greater triumph or one more likely to produce good results, first in preventing great mischief, and next in procuring great benefits. For I think that we shall have some act 0379 355 passed, providing for the Annexation of Texas at this Session, but in such form as to leave the consummation to Presdt. Polk. Mr. Calhoun in presenting his Treaty in the form of law to make the same members swallow it, who had before rejected it, because he had coupled it with an argument and an explanation of its intent, which based it altogether on the principle and purpose of extending and perpetuating slavery, has done all that he could to defeat the measure again at this session, that he did at the last. His proposition will be rejected in both branches of Congress, and this double rejection will certainly militate against its final passage in any shape. The fact that a man of so much experience as Mr. Calhoun should have brought this matter forward in a form and under circumstances which he knew would defeat it—associating with it as its essential feature the obnoxious design which would put all the Northern democrats inclined to support it in the power of their enemies, proves that he wished to make it exclusively a southern question, on which he might agitate like O’Connell on Ireland, altogether for his own projects, through the means of Sectional passions. Notwithstanding the prejudice Mr. Calhoun has thus brought on

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the cause (and the personal odium he attached to it, as its author as having once plotted against the Union and twice if not thrice against the Democratic party would have defeated it)—the measure I am convinced will succeed whenever it is thoroughly rid of him. With a view to this deliverance I have seized on your suggestion of bringing in Texas under Mr. Jefferson's Treaty of 1803 instead of Tylers and Calhoun's. And I find the proposition takes well with members of great influence in both Houses. You will have seen in the Globe the aspect in which I present it. Benton assented to the idea the moment I read the passage in your letter which broached it. You threw it out in one of your letters to me during the last Session, but I was so ill that I could not, if the time had suited, use it advantageously. I sent your letter of this session broaching it again to Mr. Van Buren, but have not yet had his reply.

I enclose to you a Bill matured by Mr. Haywood at my request, to bring in Texas under the Treaty of 1803 and to draw to it, the act of 1787 applicable to the territory of the united states and the Missouri Compromise, in case the short Bill which I proposed a few days ago cannot carry. If Mr. Haywoods Bill could be passed it would certainly secure Texas to us during this year, if she assented to it. This would accomplish all we desire, but not so directly and unconditionally as some wish. But as it certainly effects the great object, while it saves some of our tenderfooted people, I think it would be wisdom to pass it at this session if nothing better can be done. I wish you would peruse it carefully and give me your opinion of it. It would be well, too, if you would forward it to the president elect, ask for no opinion but reflexion. It is drawn up by one of his best friends, who feels a deeper solicitude than any man in Congress in my opinion, for his personal honor and the glory of his administration.

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Major Lewis shewed me a letter in which you request some enquiries to be made about the propriety of the selection of a new Cabinet for the new administration. Apart from all bias as far as I am able to divest myself of it I declare my own conviction that Mr. Polk

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should have a Cabinet entirely of new men —by this I mean not only an exclusion of the present Cabinet, but of any former Cabinet. And this I assure you is the opinion of our whole party here, so far as any intimacy with leading men, has enabled me to ascertain their opinion. With Mr. Calhoun's clique and Mr. Tylers rotten men I have very little communication, but of course they are all for the old Corps, or as it might be properly written—the Corpse , for certainly if there ever was a dead man politically, John Tyler is not only so, but literally in a state of putrefaction. There never has been such a corrupt barter of offices and contracts, not merely for political but mercenary objects as has been carried on by the satellites that revolve around Mr. Tyler. If it could be proved that he was cognizant of the brokerage which has been transacted under his authority he would be impeached and utterly disgraced. The plea of ignorance could be his only defence, but that would not turn aside suspicion from one who has employed under his very nose so many vile instruments.

If Colo. Polk would satisfy the Country, he ought to choose for his Council board, men who have not been tarnished by the Tyler association. I have a high opinion of Mason as a good and honorable man, and Wilkins is a kind-hearted man, but neither of them, if they could be retained without offence to the rest, have the industry and energy indispensable in a Department. By giving them distinguished missions both I think might be satisfied. As for Mr. Calhoun I am persuaded that he will make war against Mr. Polk and his party before the end of the Administration whether he be retained or not. His restless insatiable ambition, if he held the premiership, would never be satisfied unless the whole power of the Govt. were devoted unscrupulously to make him president at the end of four years. This Mr. Polk would not endure and he would part as he did with you and join the enemy on some pretence, seizing a crisis to do the most mischief. A man can no more change the character of an intriguing brain, than he can the color of his eyes. Mr. Calhoun tried a democratic copartnership with Crawford. Although the junior partner he fell out because not permitted to go before. He joined J. Q. Adams and run on his presidential Ticket on pledges which he forfeited, running on yours at the same time and slandering you because

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you did not give way to him as successor at the end of the first term. He played the same game on Mr. Van Buren and would on Colo. Polk. The fact is he has ruined every cause with which he connected himself. He is only mischievous when he is for us, we are only secure when he is against us. Bibb 1 is a perfect creature of his—was for you and sworn against the Bank, as utterly unconstitutional, when he turned against you, he embraced the Bank and Clay, then Harrison, and lastly

1 George M. Bibb of Kentucky, Secretary of the Treasury June 15, 1844–Mar. 3, 1845.

class=MsoNormal>0381 357 Tyler, and now he is identified with Calhoun. Wickliffe 2 has taken exactly the same round, has no popularity and has not only the Tyler taint but that of the Hardins and Wickliffe's which is enough of an Upas Tree for an Administration.

2 Charles A. Wickliffe of Kentucky, Postmaster General 1841–1845.

We have honest, capable, thoroughly democratic men of the finest private lives and popular characters all over the country who would make efficient cabinet men. We have Fairfield, Hubbard, in the north and east. 3 Flagg, Dix, Marcy, in New York, Kane in Phila., and probably other and abler men in the interior. I have no doubt that Buchannan would like to be premier, but unless he would forsake all aim for the succession it would be hazardous to take him. Allen and others are exceedingly anxious for Madison as P. M. G. He is certainly honest and energetic and capable for the place, but his calling may be a disqualification. Stevenson and Jones of Virginia would fill any place. Donelson would suit the War Depart. Haywood of N. C. would fill any place. Georgia Mississippi and Alabama have strong men. Ky. has Butler and Guthrie, the last would make a capital P. M. G. or Sec. of the Navy. Owen of Indiana is a man of high talent and power. 4

3 John Fairfield of Maine, senator 1843–1845; Henry Hubbard of New Hampshire, M. C. 1829–1835, senator 1835–1841, governor 1841–1843.

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4 John W. Jones, M. C. 1835–1845, Speaker 1843–1845; William Henry Haywood, jr., senator 1843–1846; William O. Butler, M. C. 1839–1843; Robert Dale Owen of New Harmony, M. C. 1843–1847.

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